

RealCo Incorporated - Dunkirk

EPA ID Number: NYD030215529

Other (Former) Names of Site

AL Tech Speciality Steel Corporation, Ludlum Steel Company, Allegheny Ludlum Steel Company, Atlas Crucible Steel Company, Dunkirk Specialty Steel, Empire Specialty Steel, Inc.

Site Description

The entire site occupies approximately 90 acres on Willowbrook Avenue in the City of Dunkirk. It has been in operation since 1908, and has changed owners and names several times during the years. Currently, production facilities owned by Universal Stainless Steel are located on 79 acres and the remaining 11 acres, which do not support manufacturing activities, are owned by RealCo Inc. All areas surrounding the facility are zoned residential, plus some light industrial usage to the west. RealCo is responsible for remediating its property under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Corrective Action Program, funded by responsible parties, including several former owners.

Historical operations at the facility included pickling, annealing, lime coating, lead and copper coating, cutting, drawing, degreasing, grinding, rolling, straightening, crucible and electric arc melting, coal gasification, and forging. Production processes resulted in a variety of wastes, including waste acids, spent pickle liquor, pickle rinse water, contact and non-contact cooling water, and oily wastes.

Site Responsibility and Legal Instrument

Two Orders on Consent, dated October 27, 1999 and February 13, 2002, with Empire Specialty Steel (Dunkirk Specialty Steel) and Universal Stainless Steel, respectively. Both these Orders release the companies from past environmental liability, but require them to contribute to the remediation fund.

Permit Status

This is a RCRA Interim Status facility and is considered a large quantity generator. Currently, there is no permit for operating or corrective action activities.

Potential Threats and Contaminants

Investigations completed in 1999 detected the presence of high concentrations of metals, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs) and polychlorinated biphenyls in soils at various locations and depths throughout the facility, particularly at Lucas Avenue West and Lucas Avenue. High concentrations of metals, VOCs and SVOCs were also found in groundwater throughout the site, particularly in the northwest and southwest areas.

Polychlorinated biphenyls at hazardous waste concentrations are present in the sludge in Willowbrook Pond, but have not been detected in the groundwater. Sediments in the unnamed tributary to Crooked Brook contain high concentrations of metals. The source of this contamination is being investigated at this time. There is a hexavalent chromium plume, about 15 feet below the surface, which has migrated off site. Affected property owners have been notified.

At this time the facility is not completely fenced and secured. This is especially true along Lucas Avenue where trespassers can gain access to the site by passing through the abandoned, contaminated and deteriorating plant buildings known as Lucas Avenue Plant East and West. Once on-site, the potential exists for trespassers to come in contact with exposed contaminated soils and structures.

Off-site and on-site, human contact may occur with the sediment or surface water in the tributary to the Brook. However, the nature and extent of contamination and the potential risks they pose, if any, needs to be further assessed. Potential threats from the air pathway cannot be fully assessed until the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Facility Investigation has been completed.

Cleanup Approach and Progress

The Phase II Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Facility Investigation (RFI) report was submitted in October 2003. After the Phase II RFI report is approved, remediation of all solid waste management units and areas of concern is planned to be referred to the New York State Inactive Hazardous Waste Site program. This is due to a projected lack of funds in the AI Tech Trust Fund.

An interim corrective measure (ICM) is being implemented at the Lucas Avenue Plant West since the spring of 2002 to control off-site migration of contaminated groundwater. Universal has agreed to allow RealCo to use its wastewater treatment plant to treat wastewater resulting from RealCo's corrective action activities. The condition of the Lucas Avenue Plant building, which has not been used for several years, is deteriorating and may require the implementation of an ICM to decontaminate and demolish the building. However, lack of funding at this time precludes any action.

Site Repository

Copies of supporting technical documents and correspondence cited in this site fact sheet are available for public review at:

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